

*J H Lindal*

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
THE FAMILY BUREAU OF  
WINNIPEG

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BUILDING A FOUNDATION

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OCTOBER 1, 1936 - AUGUST 31, 1937

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
OF  
THE FAMILY BUREAU OF WINNIPEG  
1937-1938

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*Presented by Miss Elin Anderson, Executive Director, at Annual  
Dinner, Moore's Restaurant, October 27, 1937*

# STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS THE FAMILY BUREAU OF WINNIPEG

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

FROM ORGANIZATION TO 31ST AUGUST, 1937

## RECEIPTS:

### Grants—

Winnipeg Community Chest.....	\$7,310.29	
Junior League of Winnipeg.....	5,000.00	
Winnipeg Foundation.....	3,200.00	
Christmas Cheer Committee.....	959.86	
Specific Donations.....	15.00	
Sundry Refunds.....	75.13	
Interest on Savings Account.....	45.17	
Miscellaneous.....	1.25	
		<u>\$16,606.70</u>

## PAYMENTS:

### General Division—

Staff Salaries.....	\$3,963.23	
Office Expenses.....	992.06	
Transportation.....	121.50	
Direct Aid.....	2,319.52	

### Housekeeper Division—

Supervisor.....	776.00	
Staff Salaries.....	392.17	
Office Expenses.....	394.02	
Transportation.....	61.50	
Housekeepers' Salaries.....	5,576.80	
Christmas Cheer Committee.....	885.32	
Office Furniture and Fixtures.....	776.62	
Organization Expense.....	103.30	
		<u>\$16,362.04</u>

\$ 244.66

## CASH AND BANK BALANCES, 31ST AUGUST, 1937:

### Balance at Royal Bank of Canada, less

Outstanding Cheques.....	\$ 119.66	
Petty Cash Fund.....	125.00	
		<u>\$ 244.66</u>

Certified Correct:

HUBERT READE & COMPANY

*Chartered Accountants*

## BUILDING A FOUNDATION

**A** YEAR AGO this month, on the first day of October, the staff of the Community Chest made room for a new-comer to be temporarily housed with them; an office was vacated, a desk was cleared; your Executive Secretary moved in and the Family Bureau became a going concern. Back of this quiet event lay a story of unusual community effort. Perhaps no other city but Winnipeg, where the initiative and generous spirit of the pioneer still lives, would have had the courage, in the midst of a profound depression, to recognize that relief was not enough, that other social services were essential to its dauntless but hard-pressed people and to go about in a systematic way to determine that need and how it could be met. The value of a survey of Winnipeg's philanthropic work was very carefully weighed and finally arranged for through the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare at Ottawa by the Central Council of Social Agencies and financed largely by the Junior League. The recommendations of that survey for a private family agency to coordinate the wide variety of volunteer effort was considered and approved by the Central Council. Then an Implementing Committee of five members, selected from the community as a whole, with one representative from Central Council, was formed and finally at a public meeting the recommendations of the Implementing Committee were approved, a Board elected and the Family Bureau became an established fact. Such is the skeleton of facts that tells little of the complex task and spirit of co-operation among widely different groups, that was essential to bringing the Bureau into existence.

### **But Why a Private Agency?**

Could that need exist in Winnipeg, which is recognized as having the most extensive public social services in the Dominion? There was such a need in 1908 when the first private family agency was established, under the name of the Associated Charities. This agency, however, owing perhaps largely to the changing conditions during the War, gradually became absorbed

into the public until, in actual practice, it became the city's Social Welfare Commission. Only time, nearly twenty years, has convinced the community that no matter how much it may fundamentally believe in public social service, such departments are not yet the agencies through which the inevitable volunteer effort of a community finds expression and leadership. In the absence of a private family agency innumerable unrelated groups, giving material relief or friendly visiting, had sprung into being. Now, such volunteer enterprise cannot be too highly commended and few cities are fortunate in having the amount of volunteer energy that exists in Winnipeg. Had our social life only remained as simple as it was in pioneer days, that volunteer service would not only have been adequate but would have remained perhaps the most desirable complement to public charity. However, the increasing complexity of our social order, the baffling problems that individuals and families must face today, require much deeper insight into the forces molding our society and profoundly influencing human behavior, and people specially trained are needed to work hand in hand with the volunteers to give a sense of direction and broad community vision to their work.

Since the public agencies in Winnipeg claim to do social work for their families, a private agency organized now, is unusually free to turn its efforts entirely to a field which offers it special opportunity, namely service to marginal or near marginal families—those families which are struggling along on an income often comparable to that of the relief budget but without the services allowed to families on relief such as medical and dental care, and clothing, and who consequently are harassed by worry over the security of their job, their health, and providing desired educational opportunities for their children. In that general insecurity family break-down begins. Since these are the families which may become either our most chronic dependents or our most valuable citizens, a private agency can do no more constructive task than to serve them before the break-down has reached the point of demanding public attention.

Proof of the need of this type of service agency was the fact that the first thirty families known to the Bureau did not come for financial assistance but rather for help in difficulties which presage family break-down. Perhaps one of the first families

known to the agency is illustrative of the type of problem presented. The wife of a minor clerk, becoming tired, at the age of twenty-eight, of ten years of rather dreary routine of married life began finding her husband extremely difficult, the care of her three children a burden, and suddenly left her family. The husband, backed by his people, was in a self-righteous rage; the children were torn emotionally between the father and the mother; the relatives, who had grudgingly taken the children in temporarily, did not want them. Upon further investigation the wife's behavior revealed serious mental strain; a psychiatrist's advice was sought and her relatives were spoken to, to be patient with her and let her have a much needed mental rest. Pressure was not put upon her to return to her husband, but rather the way cleared to help her work out her own plan, which was to go into business and establish a home for herself with one of the children. When she had had some rest we directed her to employment agencies but her ambitions to be a successful business woman were somewhat dampened when she found that the only jobs available were in housework. Meanwhile, through constant interviews with both husband and wife, separately and once together, the major difficulties were clarified for the first time. The husband's self-righteous feeling diminished as his attitude changed from moral condemnation to a recognition that he had been a factor in causing what might soon have become a serious mental breakdown. Finally, at Christmas time, the wife, much improved in health by her rest and different work, telephoned to ask her husband if they might try again and the family was re-united on a sounder footing than they had known for many years.

### **How Many Families Has the Bureau Served?**

During the year 500 families have come to our attention. Some of these, 82 in all, have been given information or direction only. 12 families were investigated as a service to out-of-town agencies, but the remaining 406 families were given care for a long or short period.

### **How Do These Families Come to Us?**

By far the largest number, 152 families, have been referred by the Relief Department. This is due largely to the fact that

the Relief Department is so well known that people go there to ask for advice as well as financial aid. Churches, private individuals and schools have referred 125 families. The Children's Aid Society and other organizations have referred the remaining 129. We have been interested to note that, as the agency progressed, more and more families were referred by interested persons throughout the community rather than by other social agencies.

### **Where Do These Families Live?**

Families known to the Bureau do not live in the north end of Winnipeg as might be expected, so much as in the congested business and residential area in the central part of town. This section, which is rapidly going down hill seems to be the last stand of the poorer white collar group. Approximately half the families known are located south of Portage and west of Sherbrooke Street; the other half, north of Portage and east of Sherbrooke. Of those located north of Portage, by far the largest proportion are centred in a small area, bounded on the south by Portage Avenue, on the east by Princess Street, on the north by William Avenue and on the west by Sherbrooke Street. However, the agency has also served families in all the outlying municipalities of the city, St. James, West Kildonan, St. Vital, St. Boniface and St. Norbert—a really vast territory in a widely spread out city like Winnipeg.

### **Had These Families Been Known Previously to Other Agencies?**

This is a question that has caused us to turn back and discover that approximately half of the families have been known to some other agency—a health agency if no other—clearing with the Confidential Exchange. They have seldom been known for any length of time by such an agency but many have been known intermittently over a period of years. The remaining half have not previously been known to any other agency. The whole group therefore reflects that very marginal group which the Family Bureau was set up to serve, the group, which on a marginal income, is making a tremendous struggle for survival and in that struggle facing crisis after crisis in their family life.

## What Were the Problems These Families Presented?

It is difficult to give in any statistical form the nature of the problems and services rendered by the agency. Troubles seldom come singly in any family and though the individual may come to the Bureau with one problem, it soon becomes evident that the situation is more complex than the first simple request, as, for example, material relief may reveal. However, problems analysed in terms of the reasons for coming to the agency may be classed somewhat as follows:

Economic, such as indebtedness, need of financial aid for small business, insufficient income to meet exceptional needs, etc.....	136
Physical Health.....	20
Mental Health.....	10
Domestic Difficulties and Non-support.....	39
Behavior and Personality Problems.....	21
Special Christmas Cheer Cases.....	25
Other Social Problems, Legal Entanglements, etc.....	45
Non-residence.....	23
Housekeeper Service.....	87

However, in addition to these problems stated, over 1100 others, often of greater importance than the one in regard to which they first asked for help, were effecting the lives of the members of these families. To assist the family to work its way out of these difficulties was sometimes beyond the ability of the agency since it lay deep within the complexity of our present social situation, but many in a large measure, were either partially or wholly alleviated.

To the great majority of marginal families, economic problems loom largest. The Family Bureau, however, jealously guards against assuming any purely relief role because it believes this should always be a public concern; consequently it seldom assists a family unless the main problem is something other than a purely financial one. Exceptions are made, however, when financial aid for a short time will enable a family to work itself through to an independent basis. The assistance given to the Clarks is an example of this. For several years, they, with their seven children had succeeded during the summer months with their market garden, but could never make it go

during the winter because of the lack of a truck with which to carry on their business throughout the entire season. Finally, in the summer of 1936, they risked everything, bought a second hand truck and tried to be independent, but when December came the family was going without necessary food and fuel in order to meet the payments on the truck. Must they give up the truck and go on relief? Such a dependable, hard-working family seemed a good risk. With assistance during the winter months from the Family Bureau, the Free Press Christmas Cheer Fund and the church, the family was enabled to meet the payments on the truck and carry on their business. During this last summer they have had a very successful season and now have their business organized so as to carry on throughout the winter. "Off relief for good," they say, "and what a wonderful feeling it is to be master of your own little business again."

The request for economic assistance was not always what it first seemed. This was particularly true in regard to clothing. Because of the naturally immediate response to such a request in a climate such as Winnipeg's, families seeking help seem often to express their need in a request for clothing, when actually they are wanting assistance in regard to instability in the family, but are embarrassed to ask for help in such private matters. The Brown's request for clothing for a pre-school child is illustrative of this. They had once before asked for help in regard to clothing for a school child and we had done nothing but notify the Attendance Officer, since clothing for school children of borderline families is provided through the schools. When we went in at the second request, we found the mother in a very run down physical condition. She had returned from the hospital with a new baby sooner than the doctor advised because she was worried over the care being given her young family of three, during her absence, by her seventeen year old brother. Due to her ill health, she was not able to give the children the attention needed. Her eldest son, influenced by his street acquaintances in the poorer neighborhood to which they had moved, had been persuaded to steal some tennis balls for the older boys. The mother was sick with dismay at this first sign of delinquency. The husband was an elevator operator working long hours for sixty dollars a month. He was compelled to pay ten dollars a month on arrears for rent, leaving him fifty dollars to house, feed

and clothe his family. The financial strain was telling so on both husband and wife that there was serious talk of a separation. Such was the need back of an incidental request for clothing. Had we realized all that lay back of the earlier clothing request we might have been able to reassure the mother while she went to the hospital, that her children would be well cared for through the assistance of a housekeeper, and other family tensions might have been avoided. A layette, an immediate need, was procured at once. Plans were made for the mother to go away for a rest, the children to go to camp; the budget was gone over and some financial assistance given for a short time to enable the family to begin paying off their debts in an orderly manner. The clarifying of a way of meeting their financial situation and the improvement in the health of the mother, together with the knowledge that a friendly visitor will stand by in need, has made a marked difference in the home life of this fine young family.

Break-down in physical health is often the first bewildering situation that confuses a family in planning for itself. Mr. Martin suffers from a War disability which has kept him in bed six months of some years and so prevented him from obtaining regular work. Mrs. Martin has had poor health for years and has now become permanently bed-ridden. The three children have always been under-nourished and sickly and were under hospital care for some time. Various agencies, military organizations and the neighborhood in which they live have known this family for years and warned the Family Bureau that they were not worthy of help, that they would take everything they could get and make no effort to help themselves and that everyone was tired of helping them. However, upon special request a contact was made; the family first assisted to secure clothing, then a long recital of their complaints was heard and a plan which would meet some of their problems was suggested. This plan called for stringent management of the income over a period of two years, while all the debts were being paid, but promised a wide use of community resources in clothing and educating the children. Within two weeks Mr. and Mrs. Martin came to the office of the Family Bureau to say they wished to adopt this plan. For five months now, even during the great stress of Mrs. Martin's illness, they have very courageously tackled the problem of clearing their indebtedness. Mr.

Martin's pension is barely above the public assistance budget for a family of that size and out of the small surplus he must buy warm clothing and extra milk and eggs for his undernourished children, must pay car-fare to and from Deer Lodge Hospital for his own treatments and buy medicine for the whole family, a fine calculation which would tax the ingenuity of any of us. Arrangements were made with the creditors to receive small regular payments and a small amount was paid to the grocer so that Mr. Martin could feel free to deal with any store on a cash basis and so cut down his expenses for food. Month by month he planned his expenditures with a worker from the Bureau. Finally, when the worker was convinced that the Martins were attacking their problems, volunteer assistance was enlisted to supply milk and eggs for the children, visit the family in a friendly fashion and assist with clothing and household equipment. Meanwhile the Family Bureau has kept in touch with the volunteers, with the medical authorities, with Mr. Martin's creditors and with the family, so that they have been able to deal with the situation as a whole. The result has been a bolstering of the morale of the members of the family until they say themselves, that for the first time, the future looks hopeful.

In many circumstances, the services rendered were very simple but their full value was just as telling. Mrs. Adams, a widow, was off relief through finding a job in a boarding house during the winter, for board and keep for herself and her young son. The need of teeth for a great many years had begun to show its results in a badly disordered digestive system. The doctor recommended that only new teeth would improve her condition. Because of her struggle to keep herself and her son off relief, it was arranged that the teeth be given as a special Christmas gift. A month later, however, Mrs. Adams came into the office looking years younger, to explain that she was now earning \$5.00 a month in the boarding house and that she wanted to pay us back at the rate of \$2.00 a month. This we assured her was not necessary, considering her other responsibilities, but her reply was, "You don't know what these teeth have meant to me. If my paying for them at the rate of \$2.00 a month can help anybody else in the same kind of trouble, I certainly want to pay it back."

Again some situations are more than usually complicated. Mrs. O'Brien had taken her husband to court for non-support, saying she could not stand any longer his drinking and leaving her and the four children to go half-starved. Mr. O'Brien had held a steady job for 25 years, but he went off on continuous sprees, which resulted in his family getting hopelessly behind in all their bills. The final break-down was in sight when the company threatened to discharge him; the bailiffs came in to seize all the furniture, various firms took steps to garnishee his wages, and his wife took him to court. When a public agency was consulted as to whether it would assist such a family, its answer was that the only solution was to have the man sent to jail, the family might then receive public support. Many cases of drunkenness are too deeply engrained to do anything about, but Mr. O'Brien's inner conflicts did not seem to be so deep but that he might be helped. It was helpful to know that he was always ashamed when he drank; that he hid away in a room for days so that no one who knew him would see him; that he had wished to be as successful as his brother-in-law. His chief worry was that the creditors harried him and when he would realize that if he paid one creditor he could not pay the others, he would decide to drink to forget about it. The immediate thing on his mind—creditors, was first dealt with. The Family Bureau worker went over the budget with Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien. Some immediate financial assistance had to be given to stave off the bailiffs' seizure; then some eight or ten irate creditors were met by the worker who, after some difficulty, persuaded them to give Mr. O'Brien one more trial at paying his debts regularly but in much smaller amounts; the company also agreed to give him one more trial. Mr. O'Brien was shown that he had to stay sober quite some time to meet his obligations. Every two weeks Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien came to the Family Bureau with his salary cheque and went over with the worker the way in which it should be budgeted. Mr. O'Brien met some of the less irate creditors while the worker met those he did not have courage to meet. After a time, when it became obvious that by this kind of planning debts were really getting cleared, the O'Briens began to look upon it as a game worth playing. They suggested that they move to a smaller house where the rent would be less. This we had hoped would

happen because we thought that a garden would occupy Mr. O'Brien's spare time. The church was called upon to assist with a friendly visitor—a man whom Mr. O'Brien would respect. Meanwhile the worker provided an opportunity for Mr. O'Brien to talk over worries and disappointments which had been piling up for years, always building up some hope of realizing a few aspirations in the future. A psychiatrist was consulted as to the best method of treatment; various members of the family were talked with about their attitude toward Mr. O'Brien—that it be one of even tenor, rather than praise at one moment and condemnation at another. Mr. O'Brien went off on one spree since first known to the agency seven months ago, but the worker kept in close touch with him and his family, so that their attitude towards him would not be extreme. Mr. O'Brien had long since grown away from his church but we had a strong feeling that he would like to regain the respect of his fellow members there. Recently he has returned and attends regularly. Mrs. O'Brien says that if the sprees are not any worse than the last one and as short, she can get along, especially if the worker stands by. Social work and indeed the medical profession, does not know enough about human nature yet to cure chronic drunkenness, but it can at least lengthen the intervals at which it occurs and work towards their becoming less frequent.

There are other situations, however, that we can do less about because of the intrinsic character of the situation or because of the lack of effective community planning to meet certain needs. Families with grown-up children who can find only partial employment, or, on the other hand, a family where a young boy assumes the entire financial responsibility for his parents and younger brothers and sisters, or an older man who finds himself, in his own words, "on the shelf" and can scarcely find the courage to face his wife and children, present problems difficult to solve. We look around in vain for lay interest in strengthening the employment service and providing vocational guidance or training for young people in relation to opportunities for jobs, and though we do find many group organizations to meet the recreational needs of adolescents, we are at a loss to find a "Big Brother" who will give individual attention to a pre-delinquent or a still older man who will befriend another who

feels that he is "on the shelf" and help him find again an important place in our society.

### **Relief Giving**

Case work with border line families struggling for survival cannot be done without some resource to relief. Recognizing the fact brought out by Miss Zoe Puxley, that poverty can no longer be recognized as the fault of the individual but rather the sickness of our social order, we have sought to prevent stigmatizing a man for a situation which is beyond his control by giving relief in cash, on a standard comparable to the schedule of the Relief Department. The hopeful light in people's eyes when they know that they are going to have cash, the squaring of shoulders as they go out, the pathetic and unasked for return in a short time to show us the receipts of all that they have purchased, to prove that they have used the money well, all convince us that cash relief is a worth while demonstration for a private agency to adopt in the hope that it may prove to the general public its value, even in public agencies.

Relief costs for the year have amounted to \$3,217.24 of which \$887.82, has come through the Free Press Christmas Cheer Fund. We hope that as far as material relief is concerned that some of the clubs and organizations in the community will direct some of their resources to the Family Bureau for whatever purpose they wish it to be used, with the assurance that not only will the specific material need be met but that the other and often more important needs, social, moral and spiritual, of the family will not be forgotten. A private service like this is always going to be hard-pressed for its relief funds unless clubs throughout the community will help in some such way.

### **The Housekeeper Service—January 7 to August 31, 1937**

The Housekeeper Service as a constructive form of family work was transferred from the Children's Bureau to the Family Bureau on January 7th of this year and functions as a separate department. Housekeepers are placed in homes under a variety of circumstances; the mother may be dead or she may be ill for a long or short period of time and either at home or away in a hospital or institution. The role of the housekeeper therefore varies somewhat, according to the family situation. Usually it

is that of a substitute mother, especially where the children are very young, when she assumes a large share of the responsibility and usually resides in the home. Where there is an older daughter in the home her task is more that of a teacher with a view to the family soon managing their own affairs in spite of the loss of the mother. Sometimes she has the much more difficult task of trying to teach a neurotic mother to follow some system and routine in her household tasks and not to become so overwhelmed by it all that her children suffer neglect. Again she may go one to three days a week to a home to do the heaviest washing, ironing and mending for a family, where even though a man may be at home, on relief, the task of being mother and father to four or five young children is an overwhelming one and discouragement would be complete were not such assistance available. Even in such short contacts the housekeeper may do much to maintain system in the household and to teach the children to carry their share of the responsibility.

A morning's telephone calls perhaps tell the story of the Housekeeper Service as well as any other way. A doctor calls to say that Mrs. Jones must undergo a serious operation but won't go to the hospital because she cannot leave her children alone and doesn't want them to go to an institution. Could we provide a housekeeper?

The Relief Department telephones to say that Mr. McLean is getting rather tense over the job of being mother and father to his five children and doing all the washing, ironing and cleaning himself. He thinks he could find work if he only had a chance to get out. Would we put in a housekeeper for a month to give him a try at finding a job? The housekeeper might also help to train those children during that time to assume some responsibility.

A neighbor explains that the young man next door, who lost his wife a short time ago and who has three children, all under school age, is having such a time finding a good housekeeper for the amount he feels he can pay. The girl he has is not looking after the children and they are running around on the streets. Could we help him out by putting in a better housekeeper? He would certainly pay all he could. Then follows the job of making necessary inquiries about these families and, if the need is evident, finding a suitable housekeeper.

Where do you get your housekeepers? is a question we are often asked. Some of them came in the transfer from the Children's Bureau, others apply from the Employment Service or the Relief Department. Sometimes when we are hard-pressed we ask the man to suggest a housekeeper and send her to us that we may look up her references and determine her suitability for the position. We try as far as possible to have housekeepers of the same nationality and certainly of the same religion as the family to which they go, and for families on relief the housekeeper must have city residence. Usually the housekeepers are older women who have been successful mothers and home managers and who are in need of work, but frequently we aim to put younger women into the homes, that is women not much over thirty, especially where the children are very young, because we have found that they have a patience and enthusiasm to work with the children that the older women have frequently lost.

During the eight months that we have had the Housekeeper Service one hundred and fourteen families have applied for such assistance and eighty-seven have been given housekeepers. At the end of August sixty-seven families were being served by forty housekeepers. Twenty-six of these were living in the homes entirely, six were working daily in the homes but going home at night and eight day workers were spending from one to three days a week in several families. We are not certain that such a large proportion of resident housekeepers is desirable from the point of view of the necessity of these handicapped families learning to adapt themselves to the loss of the mother, but so far it has been the most economical thing to do. Whereas resident housekeepers will work for from \$15.00 to \$20.00 a month, depending on the size of the family and the difficulty of the situation, day workers who maintain separate establishments and pay car-fare expect a little more pay. Although some of our housekeepers do not measure up to what we might wish them to be, on the whole we are impressed daily with the calibre of these women and the spirit of social service which is theirs in accepting a twenty-four hour a day job in frequently very difficult homes. The families range in size from two to ten children, the average family having between four and five. The cost of resident housekeeper service during

these eight months, including housekeepers' salaries and the total administration cost, that is the salary of the Supervisor and the proportion of rent, light, telephone, stenographic service, is sixteen and a half cents a day for each child as compared with the institutional cost of eighty-two cents per day per child. Housekeeper Service therefore which, at this low cost, makes it possible for a child to adapt himself to normal home life and normal community relationships and trains him to meet responsibility and be prepared to take it, cannot be too highly commended.

The job of Housekeeper Service Supervisor is not simply that of finding suitable housekeepers for these homes. In some of the families she finds a baffling complexity of problems, including inability to budget and plan for the family's need on a low income; lack of knowledge of how to prepare well-balanced meals; delinquency, temper tantrums, and enuresis among the children; and sometimes very set habits of thought on the part of the father, who is unwilling to do any of the work which he has always considered as purely "women's work."

To do adequate case work in these families is more than one worker can do. The plan for this coming year is to select a small number of our ablest housekeepers and arrange some simple training in home management and child training. This may be begun by volunteer effort but we are convinced that one of the great needs, not only in the housekeeper service, but for many other families known to the agency and to other agencies in the community, is a Home Economist with some training in parent education and a knowledge of social work, who will teach the housekeepers and groups of mothers who need it, something about budgeting, planning an effective daily routine for their household tasks, proper diet for their children, and also give them a greater understanding of children's behavior so that they can more effectively deal with troubles that arise. Such a person we are convinced, would not only assist, first of all with the load in the Housekeeper Service, but would make a contribution to the whole community by her influence upon so many of our homes which are in crisis because of poor home management or failure to understand and cope with behavior problems of the children. Since the value of such a service must first be demonstrated we are hop-

ing that the need will become so increasingly recognized by volunteer and lay groups that they will assist us in finding a way to make this service possible.

The Housekeeper Service has been fortunate that, in spite of the difficulties of four changes of staff that have had to take place during these few months it has been backed by a strong committee composed of Mrs. H. W. Manning, Chairman, Mrs. H. M. Speechly, Mrs. Anna Welch, Mrs. W. Chasney, Miss H. Stovel and Miss M. Hiltz of the University Home Economics Department. This committee has shown a deep understanding of the needs of these families and has been a great support in building the department. With the plans outlined for the coming year we look forward to genuine progress.

### **The Agency Set-up**

You will want to know this first year how the Agency is set up. The Implementing Committee needs to be praised for its careful selection for the first Board of the Bureau, people representing varying points of view but united by a deep sense of community service. I wish I might have time to call your attention to the rich resources of both personality and knowledge of the community that each member has brought to focus on the development of this agency, but I can only mention Mr. Calvert, our President, who as a worthy successor of Mr. Pearson, is showing a rare gift of leadership in developing out of the diversified interests of the Board members a unified and moving concern for family welfare.

The Board has shown unusual wisdom in its procedure: it might have gone ahead swiftly formulating policies and making hard and fast rules and regulations, but instead it has chosen the more difficult but infinitely more constructive path of formulating few policies, being essentially flexible in character and determined that the only policies laid down should be those that would enable the agency to best meet changing community needs. This wisdom is expressed in most concrete form in the Constitution. Owing largely to the guiding spirit of Mr. C. V. McArthur, the Constitution is couched in such general but adequate terms that it would seem that as long as family life is of importance to society, a family agency will have an important role to play. The purposes of the agency as set

forth in the Constitution illustrate this. They are as follows:

- (a) To foster the development of wholesome family life in this community and to give advice and information on definite problems of family welfare.
- (b) To help households and individuals who have been disorganized by poverty or environment or handicaps of personality or other circumstances to return to or achieve normal life, and to prevent threatened disorganization or disintegration of such households and individuals.
- (c) To take a part in the program of the community for social betterment, seeking in counsel with other organizations or individuals, to lessen such abuses in society as may be factors in undermining the well being of individuals and families.
- (d) To undertake further research in the field of family life and of individual maladjustments, and to make the same available for other organizations and individuals interested in social work.
- (e) To co-operate with organizations and individuals similarly engaged, both locally and throughout the country by exchange of information and otherwise.
- (f) To interpret to the public the problems of poverty and the ideals, principles and methods underlying the work of helping disorganized families and individuals to adjust themselves to their environment.
- (g) To give relief in the form of money, supplies, clothing, payments to third parties or other aid to those who are in need of same.
- (h) To promote education and training for social work.

One clause in the Constitution to which your attention is called, is regarding membership. The basis of membership in the Family Bureau is not fees but interest in the work. We would therefore like to think that your presence here tonight is an expression of your interest in the Family Bureau and that consequently you consider yourselves the first members of the Association. It is a corps of people like yourselves—our first members—whom we would like to count upon to so acquaint

yourselves with the work of the agency that you can interpret its services to the wider community, and as the agency develops, take more active part.

The Board meets regularly every month and functions through a few standing committees, composed partly of Board Members and partly of members at large. As these committees gain in assurance they will, more and more, have representation from the general membership. The Finance Committee, through the leadership of Mr. J. W. Halls, has ably steered us through our first uncharted financial year to a safe harbor. The Housekeeper Service Committee, headed by Mrs. H. W. Manning, and the Case Committee, headed by Mrs. Norman Young, both with similar functions, meet bi-monthly. The outstanding achievement of these committees is that they have met with an enquiring attitude of mind, concerned primarily with how best to serve the families in need. Their function may not always have been clear, but they have made the great step forward in not interpreting it as that of passing on cases or deciding the treatment to be given individual families; they trust their trained staff to carry them through the case-work process. We are hopeful that in the coming years their analytical approach will result in the greatest contribution that lay people can give, namely knowledge from their own rich experience of living which may bring light upon the truth that the case worker is seeking and reveal resources within and without which may enable the family to be master of its own fate again. Only such pooled knowledge of many minds will give us understanding and ability to grapple with the complication and complexity of problems facing families today. The Committee on Membership and Interpretation has perhaps not been very active because during this first year there has been very little time to do any formal publicity. On the other hand, the more valuable person to person interpretation has gone on steadily and, in addition, your Executive Secretary has addressed some thirty-eight groups, at the depressing average of one a week during the first nine months. We hope that shortly after this meeting the first formal publicity in regard to the Bureau's work will be available to all who want it.

We have been further supported in our work by volunteers, among whom the Junior League has made the greatest contri-

bution. In addition to financial support it has given volunteer assistance in respect to special needs of families, clerical work in the office and transportation. Certainly without the transportation furnished, the staff of the Family Bureau could never have covered the really vast territory that is greater Winnipeg and with one worker until Christmas, two till January and three for the remaining eight months, make 1916 visits in addition to their 1531 office interviews. The volunteer services of a few individuals stand out especially; Mrs. Robert McQueen, who, throughout the year, took charge of training Junior League girls for volunteers, gave her full time as a worker for two months, when the Housekeeper Service was hard-pressed for a Supervisor, has made all arrangements for this particular meeting, and done one hundred and one other services throughout the year; Mrs. Anna Welch, Board member and head of the Single Women's Relief Department, and Miss Elsie Lawson, Assistant Director of the Child Welfare Division, have given from their wide professional experience, advice and counsel which has saved the agency from many shoals in this, its most difficult year.

Back of the board, committees and volunteers, is the office and its staff. While the board grapples with new duties, committees learn new work, volunteers take part in study groups to prepare for service in the agency, and other interested persons, restless for the agency to develop along a particular line, are being assured that these developments will come, the machinery of the office must run smoothly. Those of you who work in well-run organizations may have forgotten how long it takes to build up a smooth running office system. Nothing was routine; everything was effort. New workers must learn the community, records must be established, index systems developed, a bookkeeping system set up—a system which can be surprisingly complicated when there are grants from three different organizations, and special grants from both Community Chest and the City for the Housekeeper Service, financial statements to be ready at different times for these organizations, housekeepers moving in and out of homes and being paid monthly, weekly and daily; then too, routine must be worked out for dictation, monthly reports, staff conferences, analysis of work; and all office procedures to be tested against the standards of the Family

Welfare Association of America, the mother association of all family agencies on the continent, in which we hope in time to qualify for membership. Sometimes when working far into the night, uncertain about the survival of the Bureau, your Executive Secretary feared that Mr. Peter Lowe and the Board of the Family Bureau had gambled too high on a photograph which emphasized a square jawed resoluteness that is seldom apparent.

These darkest moments have gone, survival has been possible, only because there has been in the community, in the board, in the staff, a great will that the agency succeed. The amazing enthusiasm, capacity for work and *esprit de corps* of the staff has made it possible to hurdle every obstacle that arose in the office with an inner assurance, sometimes very faint, that somehow it could be done. Every once in a while, however, we are amazed by the amount of responsibility that rests seemingly so easily on the very young shoulders of Miss Janet Mackie, our first staff assistant. She is in charge of the complicated book-keeping, meets you when you first come into the office, keeps track of the housekeepers, the comings and goings of the case workers and many other details. Miss Margaret Lang is so quiet and unassuming that only occasionally do we realize what an enormous amount of stenographic work she does in a day and what responsibility she assumes about the entire office routine in regard to cases and monthly reports; when all of us have forgotten a situation in a family and are in a hurry to learn it, we know that Miss Lang will know it. Nor can we forget Mrs. Garnet Dunn, volunteer, who comes at least one day every week to assist in the office routine. In the midst of pressure of work it is more reassuring than she knows to look up and find her there serene, composed and lovely, ready in any emergency to take from the shoulders of any of the staff, some of the most trying details of the work. As to case workers, at Christmas time when the Bureau became swamped with Christmas Cheer work, it was extremely fortunate to find Mrs. Kathleen Batho, a University graduate with a valuable experience in business and in a mental hygiene clinic as well as some training in family welfare work in Chicago. She is the fine artist of us all, having a sensitive appreciation of personality that makes her case work a thing of beauty.

Our Housekeeper Service which has had to weather change in staff four times in eight months has been most fortunate in having been able to find in each emergency people as able as Miss Elva Ross, Mrs. Joseph Racine, Mrs. R. McQueen and Miss Molly Macpherson. We are now very glad to welcome as a permanent Housekeeper Supervisor, Miss Fredda Peden, a graduate in Home Economics from Toronto University, as well as a graduate from the Toronto School of Social Science, whose warm human qualities as well as special abilities are already making themselves felt in this department. We are also very glad to welcome Miss Svanhuit Johannesson, a graduate in Law of Manitoba University and a graduate of the Toronto School of Social Science, to lighten the burden of the general case work division. She brings an unusually serene and analytical mind to bear upon family problems, and her coming gives us great hope that during this next year we will be able to do more of the qualitative work that the Family Bureau was set up to do.

Such is the first year's work of the Family Bureau. In the coming year it sees its job largely as building on the foundation already laid and strengthening the community ties so newly formed, especially in relation to churches; it also hopes to assume one or two new responsibilities as it is able to bear them. It has no desire to take away from the churches the responsibility that is theirs; nor certainly from the public agencies such as the Relief Department or the Social Welfare Commission the duties that belong to them. It will never be the Big Show—that belongs now to the public agencies; its aim is rather to run a Little Show well, for the great value of a private agency is that it provides the opportunity for testing out desired social measures. Whenever these measures win sufficiently wide public support to be carried out in public agencies on the same qualitative basis as in the private, the Family Bureau stands ready to give over to the public bodies such of its proven services. There will always be new untested fields for a private agency to turn to. It is only to be hoped that the present emphasis of the Bureau on qualitative case work with families will prove its value to an ever wider public until all the people will insist on high qualifications for the personnel

of its public agencies and case loads small enough to enable a case worker to give truly constructive service to the cause of family welfare.

But the Family Bureau is not only a service agency. As the doctor's role is not only to cure sickness but also to contribute his experience to the research in the elimination of disease, so the social worker is concerned not only with the service to the immediate family but with determining the root cause of that social sickness. Few agencies provide quite such a special opportunity as does a family bureau for studying and recommending improvements in social conditions, since almost all the influences of our social system affect directly or indirectly family welfare. Perhaps it is a paradox of our time with its great emphasis on public service that the private agency is most truly radical, providing as it does the social laboratory in which services envisioned by the few of deepest social insight may be tried and proven. Hence it would seem that we, the people of Winnipeg, divided as we have been ever since the general strike of 1919, can find in a family bureau the common ground on which we can begin to build together that social order which we all desire. For whether we are striving for the sake of greater economic justice or in the name of the religion of Love which we all profess, our goal is the same—the building of a social order in which poverty, disease and the accompanying ills shall be no more. Can we not unite in this great and common enterprise?

# THE FIRST YEAR'S TALLY

October 1, 1936, to August 31, 1937

Total number of families applying to the Bureau.....	500
Applicants accepted for continued care.....	237
Applicants accepted for short-time care.....	169
Applicants given Information or Direction only.....	82
Inquiries made for out-of-town agencies.....	12
Number of families receiving relief.....	176
Percentage of families under care given relief.....	43%
Amount of relief given.....	\$3,217.24
General Fund.....	\$2,329.42
Special Fund.....	<u>887.82</u>

## How the Figures Grew

	Total Cases Known	General Division	House- keeper Service	Staff Participating In Case Work	
				Full Time	Volunteer
October.....	12	12	....	1	0
November.....	25	25	....	1	2
December.....	86	86	....	2	2
January.....	197	140	57	3	2
February.....	240	178	62	3	2
March.....	279	209	70	3	2
April.....	327	247	80	3	2
May.....	387	298	89	3	1
June.....	432	335	97	3	1
July.....	471	365	106	3	2
August.....	500	386	114	3	0
	Open			Visits.....	1916
August 31, 1937.....	216	149	67	Office Interviews..	1531



